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ABSTRACT

One area of home-school-community relations research lies in the study of unique patterns of educational participation by community residents. This study was designed to investigate patterns of citizen participation in education. A questionnaire was developed and a random sample of 250 registered voters was selected from a county school district in an east central state. Ultimately, 130 completed interviews were secured. Descriptive statistics were produced to examine questionnaire responses: R-mode factor analysis identified the clustering of educational activities; Q-mode factor analysis identified the groups of participators; and discriminant analysis identified variables that differentiated significantly between and among groups of participators. Four clusters of educational activities, five groups of educational participators, and selected variables describing these groups of participators were identified. (Author/MLF)

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PATTERNS OF
CITIZEN
PARTICIPATION
IN EDUCATION¹

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Introduction

Purpose of the Study

One significant area of home-school-community relations research lies in the study of unique patterns of educational participation by community residents. These patterns of participation not only can illuminate the process of articulating and resolving competing educational demands but also can define more clearly community interactions which influence the educational system -- the goals it sets, the services it delivers, and the quality of those goals and services it maintains.

Examination of such patterns of participation is based upon the theory that people, individually and collectively, translate their educational needs and wants into participation which has

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direct or indirect influence upon the educational system of a community. In order to investigate the relationship of a community to its educational system, it is necessary both to assess the kinds of educational activity engaged in by people of a community and to identify, through those activities, groups of people who participate in these educational activities.

Quite simply, then, patterns of participation describe the relationship between activities and people who act; and, to examine this relationship, a questionnaire was constructed to identify those activities, to assess the frequency of those activities, and to describe the manner in which activities grouped themselves. In addition, the assembled data provided the basis upon which to describe the groups of people according to the kinds of activities in which they engaged and to characterize these groups in terms of selected demographic and attitudinal variables.

Literature

An extensive body of literature was available on the various aspects of this study. Of importance, however, were the following sources. The systems framework, within which this study was set, was derived from Easton's A Framework for Political Analysis (1965). The political participation model developed by Verba and Nie in Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality (1972) provided a framework for participation analysis which is predicated on the identification of kinds of participation and groups of participators. Most helpful in educational participation literature

were sections from Odell and Carter's Project CAST: The Structure and Process of School-Community Relations (1966), a five-volume work which detailed variables associated with educational activities. Lester Milbrath's Political Participation (1965) was useful in selecting key demographic variables associated with the likelihood of participation. Attitudinal literature, such as found in the various articles by Kerlinger (1958, 1961, 1967, 1970), in Robinson, Rush, and Head's Measures of Political Attitudes (1968), and in Robinson and Shaver's Measures of Social Psychological Attitudes (1969), suggested ways in which selected psychological aspects of individual behavior might be determined.

Method

Conceptual Framework

Utilizing the conceptual framework originally developed by Verba and Nie to examine political participation, it was hypothesized that four general kinds, or clusters, of educational activity could be described -- voting, campaign activity, communal activity, and particularized contacting. It was further hypothesized that six types of educational participators could be identified -- inactives, voting specialists, parochial participants, communalists, campaigners, and complete activists. Analysis of these clusters of activity and groups of participators reveals the structure of the patterns of citizen participation in education.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was created on the basis of research and judgmental decisions regarding valid questions pertinent to the principal categories of the investigation. A pilot test ensured content validity of the questionnaire, readability of the questions, respondent comprehension of the questions, and use of appropriate interviewing techniques.

The questionnaire used for this study was divided into several sections:

Demographic information. Ten questions related to general socio-economic variables were formulated. These included length of residence, sex, racial identification, income, parent status, children in school, occupation, occupational affiliation with educational institutions, age, and educational attainment level.

Educational system awareness. The educational system awareness variable, a composite variable, was composed of school leadership knowledge and educational issue awareness questions.

Participation orientation. The participation orientation variable was also a composite variable composed of questions relating to sense of educational duty, sense of educational efficacy, and sense of interest in educational activities.

General attitudes. Indices were developed which probed respondents' agreement or disagreement with a number of political, social, and educational issues; for each general set of attitudes, both progressive and traditional scales were formed.

Kinds of educational activities. Twenty-seven educational activities influencing decision-making were included in the questionnaire and were categorized according to the Verba-Nie framework used in this study.

Sample

The study was undertaken in a county school district in an east central state in the United States. A proportionate random sample of 250 registered voters was selected. Additionally, fifty substitute names were chosen for appropriate replacement purposes. Interviewers were provided background information; and a training session informed interviewers about appropriate interviewing techniques and responsibilities. Ultimately, 130 completed interviews were secured. Fifty-four persons refused to participate; seventy-three no longer lived within the district; and thirty-four could not be contacted.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were produced to examine questionnaire responses; R-mode factor analysis identified the clustering of educational activities; Q-mode factor analysis identified the groups of participants; and discriminant analysis identified variables which differentiated significantly between and among groups of participants.

Results and Discussion

Frequency of Educational Activity

Analysis of frequency of participation in the twenty-seven cited educational activities suggested that people engaged in a wide variety

of educational activities (See Table 1.) Ninety-five percent of the individuals reported involvement in at least one educational activity. Activity frequency ranged from eighty-three percent reporting "frequently or occasionally voting in county school bond elections" to one percent reporting "running for a school board position." Only one activity, that of "actively participating in or opposing a boycott of school attendance," received no reported participation. Participators voted with considerable frequency. Nevertheless, a large majority of the activities (seventy percent) each involved less than one-third of the people. However, while each of the twelve most difficult activities (those requiring most initiative) were performed by only fifteen percent or less of the people, nearly forty percent of the people did engage in one or more of these difficult activities. The average rate of participation was 6.8 activities per person. Participation in educational activity, then, was both relatively frequent and widespread.

Clustering of Educational Activities

Factor analysis (R-mode) was used to identify appropriate clusters of educational activities. (See Table 2.) Comparison of the correlation coefficients of these clusters with the hypothesized Verba-Nie clusters indicated that the derived clusters produced significantly higher within-cluster correlations. The derived clusters were labeled as parochial, cooperative, electoral, and dynamic activities.

The original cluster of voting activities associated entirely with the derived electoral cluster. The original cluster of campaign

Table 1

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY BY PERCENTAGE AND FREQUENCY

ID No.	Kind of Educational Activity ¹ (N = 139 ²)	Percent	Frequency
3	Voting frequently/occasionally in County School Bond Elections	83	115
1	Voting frequently/occasionally in County School Board Elections	79	110
4	Voted in February 1974 County School Bond Election	63	87
2	Voted in May 1974 County School Board Election	57	79
6	Frequently/occasionally tell people why they should vote for or against School Board candidates or School Bonds	44	61
19	Reported one or more active memberships in local organizations involved in solving educational problems	37	52
18	Reported one or more active memberships in local educational organizations	35	49
12	Reported contacting county teacher or administrator on school question	34	47
16	Reported working with others to solve school/educational problem	30	42
7	Frequently/occasionally work for campaigns for or against School Board candidates or School Bonds	29	41
26(27) ³	Reported participating in County School activities which did not involve one's own child	27	38
9	As parent, frequently/occasionally contact child's teacher on matter concerning the child	27	38
20	As parent, frequently/occasionally participate in child's school activities	24	33
13	Reported contacting community leader on school question	22	30
10	As parent, frequently/occasionally contact child's principal on matter concerning the child	15	21
5	Frequently/occasionally attend meetings related to School Board or School Bond elections	14	20
25(26) ³	Reported signing or writing a petition on school matters in the County	14	19
14	Reported contacting state or federal official on school question	9	13
17	Worked with others to form a new group to solve school or educational problems	9	12
15	Reported contacting mass media on school question	7	10
11	Reported contacting community leader on child's school concern	6	9
22	Frequently/occasionally actively participate in School Board Meeting	4	5
23	Reported organizing a group to oppose or support issues at County School Board Meetings	4	5
21	As parent, have organized school activity involving one's own child	3	4
24	Demonstrated for or against a County school	2	3
8	Have run for a position on the County School Board	1	2
(25) ³	Have actively participated in or opposed a boycott of school attendance	0	0

¹Exact questions can be found in the sample questionnaire.

²This figure includes seven citizens who registered zero educational activities.

³Activity 25, boycotting, is eliminated; 26 and 27 become Nos. 25 and 26, respectively.

Table 2
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY BY DERIVED CLUSTERS OF ACTIVITY
REORDERED OBLIQUE FACTOR ANALYSIS - FOUR ROTATIONS

		Factors	1	2	3	4	
		Percentage Total Variance	14%	14%	11%	9%	
Factor	Activity		9	13	2	45	Communality
1 Parochial	9. Parents contacting child's teacher.	1.000					.738
	20. Parents participating in school activities.	.997					.760
	10. Parents contacting child's principal.	.949					.682
	11. Parents contacting community/county leaders.	.802					.530
	21. Parents organizing school activities.	.577					.318
	22. Active participation in school board meetings.	.551					.338
	18. Number of active educational memberships.	.493					.446
2 Cooperative	13. Contacting community/county leader on school questions.			1.000			.670
	16. Working with others to solve educational problems.			.853			.487
	25. Signing or writing a petition.			.775			.476
	17. Forming group to solve educational problem.			.622			.307
	12. Contacting county teachers on school questions.			.606			.333
	5. Attending educational campaign meetings.			.532			.485
	19. Number of active non-educational memberships.			.293			.125
3 Electoral	2. Voting in May 1974 board elections.				1.000		.626
	4. Voting in Feb. 1974 board elections.				.993		.587
	3. Voting in school bond elections.				.923		.495
	1. Voting in school board elections.				.908		.461
	6. Telling others why to vote for bond issue or board elections.				.591		.458
4 Dynamic	15. Contacting mass media on school questions.					1.000	.586
	24. Participation in demonstration.					.820	.359
	8. Run for school board position.					.750	.461
	23. Organizing group for school board issue.					.620	.408
	14. Contacting official on school questions.					.563	.466
	26. Non-child participation in school activity.					.559	.318
	7. Helping in educational campaigns.					.438	.439

activities was eliminated, with one item going to the electoral cluster and two difficult items placed in the dynamic cluster. The original particularized contacting cluster of activities was dispersed -- the parental activities joined the parochial cluster, the difficult activities merged with the dynamic cluster, and the more socially-oriented activities placed in the cooperative cluster. The original communal cluster of activities was dispersed -- the parental activities joined the parochial cluster, the socially-oriented activities merged with the cooperative cluster, and the difficult activities merged with the dynamic cluster.

Electoral activities, representing forty-eight percent of the educational activities, were voter-oriented, conflictual, and required relatively little initiative.

Cooperative activities, representing twenty-three percent of the educational activities, tended to be group-oriented, non-conflictual, and to require some initiative.

The parochial activities, representing seventeen percent of the educational activities, were child-oriented, non-conflictual, and required much initiative.

Dynamic activities, representing twelve percent of the educational activities, tended to be school-and community-oriented, conflictual, and required much initiative.

Examination of the intercluster correlations showed that cooperative, electoral, and dynamic activities related high to each other. The parochial activities correlated less well with the other

clusters, which suggested that activities relating to children in school were essentially different from other types of educational activity. Such a finding is consistent with the probable outcomes of engaging in educational activities. Of the four clusters, parochial activities were most "self" and "family" centered. The results of contacting had an immediate impact on the individual participant. The "distance" between participation and personal benefit was greater for the other kinds of activity. Dynamic, cooperative, and electoral activities tended to have more social than personal benefits attached to them.

Groups of Educational Participators

Factor analysis (Q-mode) was used to identify appropriate groups of people based on their involvement in educational activity. (See Table 3.) The derived groups were labeled as activists, parents, citizens, voters, and inactives.

The principal distinctions between the hypothesized groups of participators and the derived groups were as follows: (1) the educational inactives were considerably less active than Verba and Nie's political inactives; (2) the educational voters experienced the same relatively low rates of activity, the specialization in electoral activities, and constituted about the same proportion of the population as did Verba and Nie's political voters; (3) the educational parents specialized in parochial activities of an educational nature as did the parochial participants in Verba and Nie's politically particularized activity; (4) the educational citizens group was much less active than

Table 3

**GROUPS OF PARTICIPATORS BY CLUSTERS OF ACTIVITY
(ACTIVISTS, VOTERS, PARENTS, CITIZENS)**

Groups of partici- pators	Classification of Data	Clusters of Activity				
		Parochial	Co-operative	Electoral	Dynamic	Total
Activists N = 51 (37%)	Number of activities	37	143	213	90	483
	Average number of activities	0.73	2.80	4.18	1.76	9.47
	Percentage of modal activities	23.0%	65.0%	47.0%	80.0%	51.0%
	Percentage of group activities	7.7%	29.6%	44.1%	18.6%	100.0%
Voters N = 24 (17%)	Number of activities	1	5	70	5	81
	Average number of activities	0.42	0.21	2.92	0.21	3.38
	Percentage of modal activities	1.0%	2.0%	15.0%	4.0%	9.0%
	Percentage of group activities	1.2%	6.2%	86.4%	6.2%	100.0%
Parents N = 34 (24%)	Number of activities	115	47	108	17	287
	Average number of activities	3.38	1.38	3.18	0.50	8.44
	Percentage of modal activities	72.0%	21.0%	24.0%	15.0%	30.0%
	Percentage of group activities	40.1%	16.4%	37.6%	5.9%	100.0%
Citizens N = 23 (17%)	Number of activities	6	27	61	0	94
	Average number of activities	0.26	1.17	2.65	0	4.09
	Percentage of modal activities	4.0%	12.0%	13.0%	0.0%	10.0%
	Percentage of group activities	6.4%	28.7%	64.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Cluster Activities as a Percentage of Total Activities		17.0%	23.0%	48.0%	12.0%	100.0%

Verba and Nie's communalists, although they formed about the same percentage of the population; (5) the campaigners did not become an identified group for educational participation; and (6) the educational activists constituted a much larger group than that identified by Verba and Nie; both groups rated low on parochial activities but strongly on the other kinds of participation and both participated more frequently and on more "difficult" activities than did the other groups.

The activists, representing thirty-seven percent of the participators, formed the largest group and included the most active participators. This group averaged 9.5 activities per person and accounted for more than fifty percent of the total activity. This group specialized in cooperative and dynamic activities; it dominated all but the parochial cluster. Activists accounted for twenty-three percent of the parochial activity, sixty-five percent of the cooperative activity, forty-seven percent of the electoral activity, and eighty percent of the dynamic activity.

The parents, representing twenty-four percent of the participators, averaged 8.4 activities per person and accounted for thirty percent of the total activity. Parents engaged in seventy-two percent of the parochial activities, twenty-one percent of the cooperative activities, twenty-four percent of the electoral activities, and fifteen percent of the dynamic activities.

The citizens, representing seventeen percent of the participators, averaged 4.1 activities per person and accounted for ten percent of the total activity. This group accounted for four percent of the parochial

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Errata Sheet

Page 13, insert new paragraph between lines 3 and 4:

The voters, representing seventeen percent of the participators, averaged 3.4 activities per person and accounted for nine percent of the total activity. This group accounted for less than one percent of both the parochial and the cooperative activities, four percent of the dynamic activities, and fifteen percent of the electoral activities.

activities, twelve percent of the cooperative activities, thirteen percent of the electoral activities, and zero percent of the dynamic activities.

The inactives, representing five percent of the participators, exhibited no educational activity.

Characteristics of Educational Participators

Of the variables utilized to characterize groups of participators, length of residence, income, progressive political attitudes, social progressive and traditional attitudes, and educational progressive attitudes were found not to be significant (at .05 with 4 and 134 degrees of freedom). Sex, racial identification, parent status, children in school, age, educational attainment level, educational awareness, participation orientation, parochial activities, cooperative activities, electoral activities, dynamic activities, political traditional attitudes, and educational traditional attitudes were found to be statistically significant. (See Table 4.) The following profile of the groups of participators indicates those variables on which each group ranked highest or lowest in comparison with the other groups.

The activists tended to be white, to demonstrate high educational attainment level and income level, and to score highly on cooperative, electoral, and dynamic activities. They exhibited the lowest proportion of "parent status" participators.

The parents tended to be female, "parent status" participators, and participators with children in school; they demonstrated high educational awareness and participation orientation; and they scored

Table 4
SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL OF VARIABLES

Variable	F-Ratio: 4 & 134 Degrees of Freedom	Significant at .05 Level*
1. Length of Residence	0.75	No
2. Sex	3.31	Yes
3. Race	2.48	Yes
4. Income	2.42	No
5. Parent Status	4.48	Yes
6. Children in School	39.07	Yes
7. Age	3.44	Yes
8. Educational Level	4.96	Yes
9. Educational Awareness	6.57	Yes
10. Participation Orientations	13.44	Yes
11. Parochial Activities	57.35	Yes
12. Cooperative Activities	18.47	Yes
13. Electoral Activities	15.55	Yes
14. Dynamic Activities	21.52	Yes
15. Political Traditional Attitudes	2.70	Yes
16. Political Progressive Attitudes	1.80	No
17. Social Traditional Attitudes	1.40	No
18. Social Progressive Attitudes	0.09	No
19. Educational Traditional Attitudes	3.63	Yes
20. Educational Progressive Attitudes	0.09	No

*Minimum F-ratio for statistical significance is approximately 2.44.

highly on parochial activities. This group tended to be young and to score low in political, social, and educational traditional attitudes.

The citizens tended to be male and black.

The voters tended to be long-time residents and to have low income levels.

The inactives tended to be older and to score highly in political, social, and educational traditional attitudes; they ranked lowest in having children in school, in educational attainment level, in educational awareness, in participation orientation, and in parochial, cooperative, electoral, and dynamic activities. Inactives also resided the least number of years in the county.

Discriminating Variables

Discriminant function analysis identified those variables which best differentiated the groups of participators. Four significant discriminant functions were generated. (See Tables 5 and 6.)

Function 1, the parochial function, contrasted parents and activists and suggested that the most significant discriminators between these groups were their rankings on parochial and dynamic activities. Function 2, the dynamic function, contrasted activists and inactives, and showed that dynamic activities best discriminated between them. Function 3, the electoral function, contrasted voters and inactives and showed that electoral activities best discriminated between them. Function 4, the cooperative function, demonstrated that cooperative activities best differentiated between the voters group and the citizens group.

DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLE

Step Number	Variable Entered*	Number Included	Wilks' Lambda	Sig.	RAO'S V	Change in RAO's V	Sig. of Change
1	V11	1	.369	.000	229.415	229.415	.000
2	V14	2	.173	.000	438.611	209.196	.000
3	V13	3	.133	.000	502.565	63.953	.000
4	V12	4	.112	.000	545.747	43.182	.000
5	V10	5	.099	.000	572.735	26.988	.000
6	V06	6	.090	.000	617.687	44.953	.000
7	V03	7	.084	.000	635.016	17.328	.002
8	V04	8	.079	.000	645.334	10.318	.035
9	V15	9	.074	.000	664.869	19.535	.001
10	V07	10	.071	.000	682.526	17.657	.001
11	V01	11	.066	.000	696.096	13.570	.009
12	V02	12	.064	.000	713.079	16.984	.002
13	V17	13	.061	.000	723.214	10.134	.038
14	V19	14	.058	.000	736.279	13.065	.011

* Note: See Table 4 for variable identification.

Discriminant Function	Eigenvalue	Relative Percentage	Canonical Correlation	Functions Derived	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-Square	DF	Significance
				0	.056	368.599	60	.000
1	3.718	66.97	.888	1	.265	170.017	42	.000
2	1.229	22.14	.743	2	.590	67.424	26	.000
3	.354	6.38	.511	3	.799	28.639	12	.004
4	.251	4.52	.448					

DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLE

Table 5

Table 6

DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION COEFFICIENTS AND CENTROIDS

Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients*				
	Func 1	Func 2	Func 3	Func 4
V01	.028	- .179	.205	- .429
V02	- .080	- .071	- .112	- .208
V03	.095	.056	- .073	- .456
V04	.008	.041	- .456	.112
V06	- .238	- .203	.373	.251
V07	- .087	.206	.250	.485
V10	- .083	- .313	.563	.453
V11	- .702	.039	- .469	- .088
V12	.136	- .234	- .444	.641
V13	.132	- .302	.657	- .200
V14	.403	- .355	- .394	- .392
V15	.070	.205	- .293	.400
V17	.029	- .293	- .233	- .427
V19	.028	.255	.187	.226

Centroids of Groups in Reduced Space				
Groups of Participators	Func 1	Func 2	Func 3	Func 4
Activists	.786	- .653	- .199	.036
Parents	-1.482	- .351	- .103	- .053
Citizens	.074	.701	.498	.796
Voters	.303	.609	.583	- .731
Inactives	.195	2.069	-1.684	- .110

* Note: For variable identification, see Table 4.

The parochial and dynamic clusters of activities proved to be the most significant discriminators; electoral and cooperative activities were also good discriminators between groups. Not unexpectedly, this conclusion validated the derivation of the four clusters of activities in that each cluster distinguished between separate groups of participators. Additionally, this finding confirmed the concept that different groups of participators specialized in selected kinds of educational activity.

Secondarily, participation orientation demonstrated good discriminating ability between groups. Other variables including children in school, traditional social and educational attitudes, income, age, race, and length of residence showed good discriminating capability.

The analysis classified the groups of participators by identifying membership in the groups based on each respondent's scores on the discriminating variables. Overall, the discriminating variables suggested that more than eighty-three percent of the participators were correctly classified by the Q-mode factor analysis. This proportion of correct classifications indicated that the variables tended to be good discriminators. (See Table 7.)

Conclusion

This study was designed to investigate patterns of citizen participation in education. Utilizing a questionnaire developed for the study, four clusters of educational activities, five groups of educational participators, and selected variables describing these groups of participators have been identified.

DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS PREDICTION RESULTS

Groups of Participants	Group Probability	No. of Cases	Predicted Group Memberships				
			Activists	Parents	Citizens	Voters	Inactives
Activists	.37	51.	40. 78.4%	1. 2.0%	5. 9.8%	4. 7.8%	1. 2.0%
Parents	.24	34.	0. .0%	32. 94.1%	2. 5.9%	0. .0%	0. .0%
Citizens	.17	23.	1. 4.3%	0. .0%	19. 82.6%	3. 13.0%	0. .0%
Voters	.17	24.	2. 8.3%	0. .0%	3. 12.5%	19. 79.2%	0. .0%
Inactives	.05	7.	0. .0%	0. .0%	1. 14.3%	0. .0%	6. 85.7%

*Note: Discriminant variables correctly classified 83.4% of the participants.

DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS PREDICTION RESULTS

Table 7

The most clearly defined groups of participators were the activists, the parents, and the inactives. Fourth and fifth groups, the citizens and the voters, were significantly, but less clearly, defined. Differences between citizens and voters appeared to be less evident than were differences between the other groups.

This research was oriented toward descriptive rather than causal analysis. Future research might (1) validate the clusters of educational activity, the groups of educational participators, and the characteristics of these participators; (2) identify why people selectively participate in educational activities; and (3) determine the consequences of selective participation on policy formulation. Awareness of the patterns of participation of individuals and communities should facilitate the administrator's task in decoding the varied demands placed upon the school system.

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